

U.S. Serial Application No.: 10/802,506
Attorney Docket No.: C-7230
Response to Office Action mailed 08/31/2006

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REMARKS

Claims 1, 4, and 7-11 have been amended to further clarify Applicants' presently claimed invention.

Claims 12-20 have been withdrawn.

New Claims 21 and 22 have been added.

Claim 1 has been amended to further clarify that the heat supplied to at least one of the acetic acid reaction stream and the purification section for purifying vinyl acetate is heat removed from an exothermic reaction generated by the production of the acetic acid. Further, Claim 1, and the claims that depend therefrom, have been amended to clarify that the heat removed from the production of acetic acid is transferred into a heat transfer system, which in turn provides the heat from the production of acetic acid to at least one of the acetic acid reaction stream and the purification section for purifying vinyl acetate. Support for these amendments may be found in numbered paragraphs [0009] to [0014], and numbered paragraphs [0023] to [0033].

New Claims 21 and 22, which depend from Claim 1, further limit Applicants' presently claimed invention to an embodiment wherein the recited heat transfer system comprises a pump-around condensate loop. Support for these claims may be found in numbered paragraph [0023] and [0024]. No new matter has been added.

Response to Restriction Requirement Pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §121

In compliance with the Examiner's requirement pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §121, Applicants hereby elect to prosecute Group I, Claims 1-11, with traverse. This election is being made without prejudice to Applicants' rights with respect to Claims 12-20 including the right to rejoiner, and the right to file divisional applications thereon. Accordingly, Claims 12-20 are hereby withdrawn from further consideration.

Applicants respectfully submit that the restricted species are within the same field of search, and examination of the claims as filed would expedite prosecution without requiring an unreasonable amount of additional search time. Therefore, examination of

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the claims as filed does not represent an undue burden. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Restriction Requirement be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections-35 U.S.C. 102 (b) or 103(a)

Claims 1 and 2 have been rejected as being anticipated by, or rendered obvious over WO 2001/90042, evidenced by U.S. Patent No. 6,790,983 to Zeyss et al. (hereinafter Zeyss.)

Applicants recite a process wherein heat is removed from an exothermic process being used to produce acetic acid. This removed heat is then transferred into a heat transfer system. This heat from the production of acetic acid is then removed from the heat transfer system and provided to other parts of the process (i.e., the at least one of an acetic acid reaction stream and a purification section for the purification of vinyl acetate.)

Zeyss is generally directed to the production of acetic acid. However, as Examiner admits, Zeyss fails to disclose or suggest removing heat from the production of acetic acid and transferring that removed heat to other parts of the process. As Examiner points out, heat contained in the acetic acid stream is necessarily transferred to the acetic acid reaction stream during the process. Applicants have amended Claim 1 to further clarify that the heat added to the other parts of the process (i.e., the at least one of an acetic acid reaction stream and a purification section for the purification of vinyl acetate) is heat that is removed from the production of acetic acid and transferred into a heat transfer system. Applicants thus differentiate the recited heat removed from the production of acetic acid and then transferred via a heat transfer system from the latent heat present in the acetic acid stream referenced by Examiner.

Since Zeyss fails to disclose or suggest all the limitations recited by Applicants, Zeyss cannot reasonably be found to anticipate, nor render obvious Applicants' presently claimed invention. Removal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 3-11 have been rejected as being unpatentable over Zeyss in view of Kirk-Othmer Encyclopedia of Chemical Technology 2002, Article Online Posting Date: July 19, 2002 pp. 115-136 (hereinafter Kirk Othmer.)

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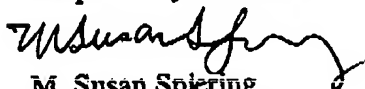
As outlined above, Zeyss fails to disclose or suggest removing heat from the production of acetic acid and providing this heat via a heat transfer system to other parts of the process. Kirk Othmer also fails to disclose or suggest Applicants' presently claimed invention. The diagrams and the discloser of Kirk Othmer fail to disclose or suggest a heat transfer system wherein heat generated by the production of acetic acid is removed from the process being used to produce acetic acid, and is then provided to another component of the process via a heat transfer system. As such, Kirk Othmer fails to remedy the deficiencies of Zeyss. Since neither Zeyss nor Zeyss in combination with Kirk Othmer disclose or suggest all of Applicants' recited limitations, the references either alone or in combination cannot reasonably be found to render the presently claimed invention obvious. Removal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present invention in view of the amendments and remarks noted above. Claims 1-11 and 21-22 are allowable and such notice of allowance is respectfully solicited.

Applicants invite the Examiner to contact the undersigned attorney by telephone if there are any matters or issues outstanding that have not been addressed to the Examiner's satisfaction.

Respectfully Submitted,


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